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ABSTRACT

Pertinent questions are raised which challenge the appropriateness of the student teaching experience. Research studies have shown that many beginning teachers found great difference between the more protected experience of student teaching and the real world of the beginning teacher who takes on the full responsibilities of the classroom. Future teachers need time to acquire "professional literacy", an aggregate of knowledge and understanding, skill and technology which is comprised of three major dimensions: (1) pedagogic arts; (2) personal and interpersonal dynamics; and (3) environmental knowledge of the school and its culture. A two-year induction process of internship and residency is proposed which will enable future educators to develop professional literacy and a knowledge base about the wisdom of practice in a collaborative effort of university and school districts. The primary objective is the retention of new teachers in the profession. (JD)

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THE IRRELEVANCE OF STUDENT TEACHING
FOR
SUCCESSFUL INDUCTION INTO THE PROFESSION

by

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ABSTRACT

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A two-year induction process of internship and residency is proposed which will enable future educators to develop professional literacy and a knowledge-base about the wisdom of practice in a collaborative effort of university and school districts. The primary objective is the retention of new teachers in the profession amidst the swirling urgency of reform movements.

THE IRRELEVANCE OF STUDENT TEACHING
FOR
SUCCESSFUL INDUCTION INTO THE PROFESSION

We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started,
And know the place for the first time.

--T. S. Eliot

The spirit of change is all around us. As Leibnitz observed, "The present is great with the future." The world is traveling inexorably toward a new age; and we must take action very soon in order to help future teachers help their students to accept the challenges of this new age. Teachers are central to educational reform (Frymier, 1987).

The first wave of reform often focuses on immediate results, tangible solutions, and measurable responses. As state governors, college deans, and concerned citizens curiously join to announce the problems, they not unexpectantly offer a litany of primarily economic remedies which could wonderfully save the public schools from the brink of disaster. Whatever has been accomplished so far has largely emphasized requirements for graduation and minimum standards for accreditation, as found in policy statements and regulatory language.

The reforms which have crisscrossed the country have not addressed the fundamental issue. Regardless of the length of the school day, the challenge of competency tests, or the number of sterner requirements, the constancy of any reform will be elusive until we discover how to keep teachers in the profession. The projections are disturbing:

- °40% of all new teachers will leave within three years
(Schlecty & Vance, 1983)

- °1.1 million teachers will leave by the early 1990's
(Shanker, 1987)

- °197,000 new teachers will be required each year, about one-fourth of all college graduates, though only 5% intend to become teachers (National Center for Educational Statistics)

Even with all the "right stuff"--liberal arts and sciences background, depth of study in some acceptable discipline, and pedagogical skills--the first-year teacher is faced with an almost impossible task of full induction into the ranks of the professional educator.

The clues for what has gone wrong may be found in the typical student teaching experience, notwithstanding the prediction that those who gain accelerated entry into classroom teaching through alternative certification programs will have even more difficulties because of less preparation and less readiness (Huling-Austin, 1988). But if we are to search for solutions, dream about the possibilities, and design the plans for reaching our higher goals, we must first look at where we have been and review where we are now.

The Way It Was

President Andrew Jackson fervently believed that any citizen in a democracy could assume the responsibilities of any public office in the community--and public school teaching was a public office (Butts & Cremin, 1953). In pre-Civil War America no special qualifications were necessary to be a teacher. With few textbooks, workbooks, reference guides, or libraries available, those who became teachers learned to teach by teaching--that is, on-the-job training. Since most teachers were young men waiting for professional posts or young women waiting to be married, few stayed on the job for more than a few years. They learned by trial-and-error what worked for them in the classroom, and they seldom shared their successful techniques with those who followed. The major purpose was "schoolkeeping," or maintaining order.

The public school concept captured the support of increasing numbers of citizens, and the need for teacher training resulted in the establishment of normal schools, with the main objective the provision of the rules for teaching (Borrowman, 1956). When the first normal schools were founded--a private institution by Samuel R. Hall in Concord, Vermont in 1823 and the public counterpart by the Massachusetts Board of Education in Lexington in 1839.--the European influence permeated the curriculum and the methods, particularly the apprenticeship model, in order to ensure that traditions were successfully carried on. Then, and to the present time, the public has tended "to endorse very traditional approaches

to teaching," viewing innovation with suspicion (Travers, 1983). Early forms of the apprenticeship model indicate the sharing of techniques by a master teacher to students in teacher-training classes, who in turn would teach one another (Edwards, 1865). Later, opportunities for "practicing" with real children were made available for specified periods of time while under the tutelage of experienced teachers in the field. Over 100 years later, this apprenticeship model is still pervasive and popular. Some educators, particularly those in state offices, insist that longer apprenticeships are necessary while inconsistently and simultaneously allowing alternative routes to certification to go forward, with the apprenticeship in this latter case being a first-year, mentoring arrangement (Culver, Eicher, & Sacks, 1986).

The purpose or outcome of the apprenticeship model is to ensure that the apprentice teacher models the master, that is, satisfies the master that, according to some local standard, he or she is fit to teach (Cruickshank & Armaline, 1986, ppp. 35-36).

But Dewey long ago warned against placing teacher trainees in apprenticeship experiences because they would be tempted to imitate the practices found in their placements rather than reflect on the practices they observed (Dewey, 1904). Later writers tend to agree.

Prolonged clinical experiences may perpetuate an educational status quo Students may tend to accept existing conditions, patterns, and relationships as forming the boundaries beyond which one need not, or should not, trespass Such patterns may serve to replicate and make more uniform practices of schooling and teaching (Beyer, 1984, p.36).

The Way It Is

Goodman (1985) has essentially confirmed John Dewey's concerns. McIntyre (1983) concurs and has categorized the shifts in attitudes of student teachers as they have progressed through their field experiences:

1. Attitudes of student teachers and their supervisors became more similar.
2. Student teachers' attitudes toward their own students declined.
3. Student teachers' attitudes became more rigid and more custodial.
4. Student teachers became less communicative during their field experiences.
5. Student teachers demonstrated more concern for completing their lesson plans on time than they did for their students.
6. Student teachers focused progressively more time and energy on maintaining discipline above everything else.

Traditional student teaching has steadily been falling in disfavor among educators over the years. Peck and Tucker (1973) state the case in this way: "By the end of student teaching, there are some almost universally reported decrements in attitude and in teaching behavior, as compared with the starting position of students prior to their field experience" (p. 967). Ten years later, Griffin and associates (1985) discovered almost no changes in the student teachers as a result of their student teaching experience. In a search for studies linking identifiable characteristics of student teaching with later teacher performance, Evertson and colleagues found none, suggesting that the role of preservice teaching in teacher preparation is overrated (1985).

Along with imitation of the practices of cooperating teachers and subservience to their demands, student teachers frequently strive for immediate proficiency rather than judge and analyze their own work. Berliner believes that student teaching actually "retards the development of analytic skills and, thus, in its present form, militates against the development of the profession" (1985, p. 3). Berliner persistently discusses the areas of concern for the profession which the teacher must address if we are to continue to improve the quality of teaching. Recent advances in pedagogical knowledge allow us a brilliant opportunity to provide teacher education with a scientific foundation (Berliner, 1985).

For example, we now know from research findings the effects of time-on-task, the high rate of success experiences needed for developing literacy, wait-time, the myriad professional decisions for changing one student's pace and another student's direction, expectation levels, the configurations of behaviors typical of low performers. So, Berliner raises the pertinent questions which challenge the appropriateness of student teaching (1985):

1. Where are teachers going to get the chance to practice these behaviors in a safe environment where they can not harm children while learning their pedagogical skills?
2. Where can teachers learn to examine and control their own behavior in order to ensure that they are not endangering the growth of students, particularly those who are ethnically and culturally different?

Obviously on-the-job training is not the place for learning how to create the right kind of environments for children.

The Holmes Group Report is especially critical about this traditional clinical experience, citing that experience as neither broad nor deep (Sedlak, 1987, p. 322):

Cooperating teachers are usually arbitrarily assigned and too often lack essential professional knowledge and skills needed to strengthen the learning of prospective teachers. University supervision is infrequent. It is common for the experience to be limited to a single school, classroom, and teacher, and it rarely builds on the general principles and theories emphasized in earlier university study. Everyone does well. Yet most students quickly conform to the expectations and practices of their single supervising teacher, and rarely put novel techniques into practice or risk failure. They succeed so easily because they relinquish the norms of professional colleges of education without a struggle. The experience emphasizes imitation of and subservience to the supervising teacher, not investigation, reflection, and problem solving.

The implications of the student teaching experience upon the success of the first position in the profession are obvious. The first-year teacher is faced with the impossible task of full induction into the ranks with no transition period or process. The difficulties of this initial year are well documented (Veenman, 1984). It is clear that the new teacher is unprepared for the realism of that first job. Confronting the bureaucracy of central office, school board intransigence, and taxpayers' associations can be just as formidable as reviewing unrecognizable instructional materials, unworkable lesson plans from last year, and unmanageable students who do not behave or perform in the ways the textbooks said they would or the cooperating teachers insisted they did.

Armstrong (1984) discovered that many beginning teachers were shocked at the great difference between the more protected experience of student teaching and the real world of the beginning teacher who usually takes on the full responsibilities of the classroom. They were unprepared for the stress of peer expectations, classroom management, planning activities, assessment of student work, dealing with individual learning differences, time management, organization of class work, relationships with parents, insufficient teaching materials and supplies, and most of all the emotional draining which intrudes into their awareness almost every day when they leave the school building (Veenman, 1984).

New teachers remember that they never had to deal with school board meetings and presentations, teacher organizations, town finance boards, community resources, endless curriculum changes, choosing textbooks, making up budgets for educational materials and technological equipment. They never had to set up a classroom for the first time; learn new policies and regulations; tackle the timeless problems of motivation and discipline which try the patience of even seasoned professionals. At the same time they probably are having to make other adjustments--to a new community, a new home, a new bank, new medical specialists, maintaining a car, new friends (Hogue, 1986).

We still break in beginning teachers much as movie horses are broken. Beginning teachers are expected to perform as well as their more experienced colleagues. . . . They are likely to have difficult teaching assignments and few resources. They have little assistance Not sure what is expected of them, they feel they are being watched closely by others to see if they will make it. It is a lonely time, an emotionally draining time, a frustrating experience (Houston and Felder (1982).

Teaching is generally considered to be an isolated activity, with teachers falling into a narrow perspective of their own classroom activities (Fullan, 1982). There is little peer interaction, and so the new teachers must for the most part cope on their own, as best they can. The cost of this neglect includes constriction of their instructional options, more hostile management of their students, and a host of strategies calculated to control the classroom at all costs (Joyce & Clift, 1984).

The level of adaptation to the new job depends upon two major factors: (1) The similarity of the new environment to what has already been experienced, and (2) the amount of new information requiring processing by the new teacher. In the first instance, if the environment is very dissimilar, then the reaction can be either quite intense in a maladaptive way or a resorting to previously learned responses, which can also be inappropriate (Wohlwill, 1974). In the second instance, information overload could occur when the amount of information from the new environment exceeds the new teacher's capacity to process all that is relevant (Cohen, 1980). The results of this overload could be limited effort, more attention to a few tasks, and an incapacity to tolerate even more demands or frustration. It should surprise no one that withdrawal from the profession is the ultimate choice of so many new teachers.

The Way It Could Be

A new approach must be introduced which could both counteract the insularity of student teaching and reduce the attrition rate of new teachers--50% of all new teachers leave the profession within seven years of their first job (Huling-Austin, 1988)--while expanding the concept of clinical experience to include site variety, a diversity of student populations, and ethnographic research. Future teachers need time to observe, reflect, explore, investigate, and experiment, as well as opportunities for comparing and matching the best of what they find and try out with their own abilities. These discoveries should take place with the support of experienced field experts at the level of practice. The "wisdom of practice" is essential for the demonstrable claim of a specialized knowledge base to the profession of teaching (Shulman, 1987).

This aggregate of knowledge and understanding, skill and technology, can be communicated through the development of what is called here "professional literacy," over a two-year induction period, as noted in Figure 1.

PROFESSIONAL LITERACY

The concept of professional literacy comprises three major dimensions: (1) Pedagogic arts, (2) personal and interpersonal dynamics, and (3) environmental knowledge of the school and its culture. (See Figure 2.)

Pedagogic Arts

It is the classroom teacher who stands at the critical intersection between theory and practice. The opportunity must be afforded for preservice teachers to collaborate with the experienced teachers--not to blindly imitate, but rather to learn how to think for themselves about teaching and learning, by engaging in a continual process of reflection and inquiry about theory and practice with professional educators.

Prospective teachers need the opportunity to attend to school life in a focused, sensitive way; to compare, integrate, identify, and appraise what has been seen; and to share their knowledge of classroom practice. School-based research provides both the opportunity to reflect on practice and the structure to share such knowledge.

The profession of teaching necessarily entails a long list of classroom skills--such as, questioning strategies, classroom management, and instructional planning--as well as the rhythm of classroom flow and change. Prospective teachers should encounter a variety of approaches in these arts by watching and working with several professional artisans while in the midst of practicing their art. Typical student teaching does not provide such opportunities; nor does taking on the full responsibilities of the classroom in the first year on the job.

Personal and Interpersonal Dynamics

This subset of professional literacy goes beyond the traditional foundations courses at the university. It pertains to the exigencies of time management so that the new teacher maintains a personal and family life and has the energy to deal with crises and financial arrangements. It means discovering the sources of all kinds of information--e.g., insurance, retirement, investments for personal consideration--in addition to information about special programs at the opera house, at the planetarium, at the Christmas tree farm. The first-year teacher must be initiated into professional politics, school board policy-making, and communication systems among peers, among children, and among students' parents.

These concerns are not addressed during student teaching because, for the most part, they are irrelevant to that all-consuming period. So, when the new teachers take over their newly assigned classrooms, these matters of necessity leap out at the neophytes, forcing them either to attend to them in some kind of priority list or to put some aside until some indefinite period when supposedly time will be freed up for seeking solutions and for processing into memory.

Environmental Knowledge

New teachers often face cultural shock when they assume the responsibilities of their first classroom. Some of the hardship of that first year can be seen as a function of their assignment. In one study the authors found that misplacements were common,

difficult teaching situations with unmotivated children were widespread, and overloads with too many preparations were frequently expected (Huling-Austin, Putnam, & Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986).

Zeichner and Teitelbaum (1982) suggest that students should spend less time in practice teaching and more time ". . . in studying the culture of the school and its relationship to the surrounding community through the methodology of participant observation" (p. 107). Prospective teachers should study the linguistic habits of their students, become aware of cross-cultural communication networks, develop the methods of inquiry into society's problems, and make comparisons of urban communities with suburban and rural settings. They should have insight into school cultures, of experiences from and with different reference groups, about models and heroes. If the new teachers, along with their more experienced and expert peers, can codify such information, together with differences in the effectiveness of techniques from the various groups and settings, then it will be possible to obtain a cultural literacy which is likely to make these new teachers more successful--and sooner.

As we collect and reflect upon the myriad points of performance and the varieties of cultural settings, we can expect to establish the important standards of practice and the continuation of the reform movement.

THE INDUCTION PHASE

A gradual induction process is proposed which would bridge the university years as foundation during the baccalaureate program to the final stage of full membership into the profession. The two-year track would include a paid internship and a residency with a reduced load, followed by an initial year of full teaching responsibilities. This induction track would work whether the baccalaureate years were spent as an Education major, with or without student teaching, or as an academic major. The graduate courses would be somewhat different in terms of whether they are directed toward pre-service or toward specialization.

The Internship Year *

Interns would be assigned to one school building throughout the academic year after interviewing and being accepted by both the university and a school district. They would provide para-professional duties every day, consisting of substitute teaching, tutoring, small-group instruction, classroom instruction, assessing student characteristics and performance, team teaching, curriculum planning, materials design, monitoring student progress, supervising in special units (e.g., music room, library, computer center, science laboratory, etc.), group discussion, supervising extra-curricular activities, overseeing laboratory exercises, and conducting ethnographic research.

The interns would undertake supervised observations of each instructor in their assigned school building. They would reflect upon their observations and discuss with both other interns and their supervisors the varied techniques of each school's instructional staff.

Their training at the beginning would consist of survival skills in all the disciplines, classroom activities, and basic information about the functioning of contemporary schools. Workshops and seminars throughout the year would be conducted to discuss their observations, reflect on their own teaching and role-playing as well as similar activities of other interns, provide information about school board policies on such topics as drugs and firearms, and share results of research they have undertaken at their placements. The interns would learn their craft by watching a variety of teachers and trying out their techniques and then experimenting with their own approaches in various settings, with a great variety of student ability and interest, and in the various disciplines besides their own specialty. They would be called upon to substitute in any of the disciplines, with first choice given in their major. University supervisors would be assigned to visit their interns several times throughout each semester, holding periodic conferences with them and with their placement coordinators.

The interns would be seen as a regular member of the staff, although in training. They would be available to take over a class in the event of an emergency or in the scheduling of a parent-teacher conference. They could confer with a teacher before and after a planned absence, such as surgery or maternity leave.

While the interns are reporting to their placements every day, they would attend seminars with their peers and with their supervisors in the field, other seminars and workshops at the university to reflect and assess their experience, and pursue their academic studies in a pre-service program or in some specialization during the evenings, the summer months, and on weekends. Later in the spring semester, the interns may be able to take on long-term sub assignments or participate in team-teaching arrangements with partial responsibilities in curriculum development and instructional planning.

Since the interns would not be considered a school employee, the university would function as a broker, bringing together a school district and one or more interns. The participating school districts would pay the university a sum of dollars under a collaborative, contractual arrangement for each intern's Master's degree program. The university would also provide a monthly stipend to the interns for books, travel, special course fees like labs and clinics, liability insurance, and so forth.

The Residency Year

The resident would become an employee of the school district, though with a reduced load. A support team of school staff would monitor the work of the residents, who would continue to be supervised by university faculty. Residents would be assigned to a department of their specialization or to a unit of grade levels (e.g., primary, middle school).

Their duties would include team teaching, sharing a classroom with other residents, overseeing the work of interns assigned to their building, participating in workshops for interns, assistance to other teachers in their specialization or grade level, conducting ethnographic research, contributing to the knowledge base about the wisdom of practice. They would be expected to develop curriculum materials for use through a variety of media--i.e., computers, VCR, film projections, slide projections, workbooks, mock-ups, and the like.

Workshops would be provided by the collaborative efforts of the university and school staff. The content of periodic seminars and the continuing program of academic studies could focus on school culture, community relations, evaluation, organizational development, management principles, leadership styles, board policies, linguistic patterns, financial support of educational institutions, comparative education, and other such topics devoted to enlarging upon the knowledge base on teaching and effective practices.

A FINAL NOTE

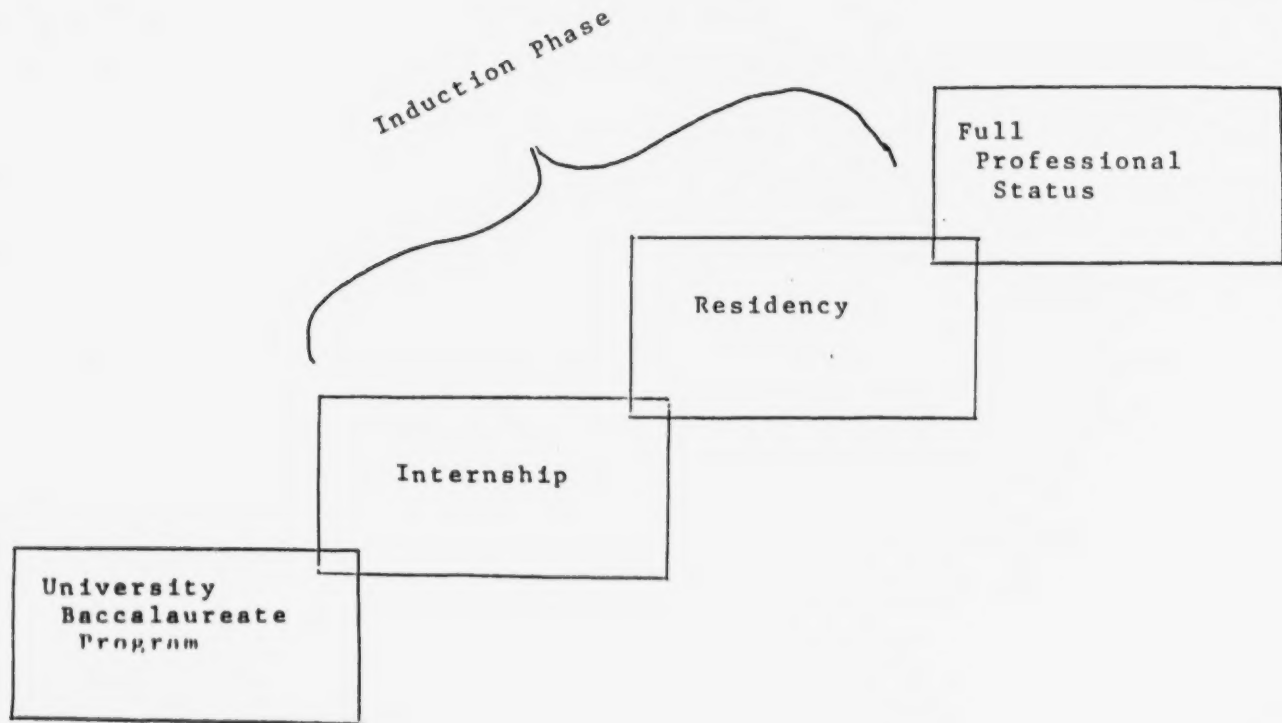
The typical arrangement of moving from a cocoon-like teacher-training program, including the limiting parameters of student teaching, into a full acceptance of responsibilities as a teacher,

is anything but satisfying to the new professional, even with a mentor teacher. Nor does an alternative program which by-passes a teacher-preparation schedule of courses and experiences accomplish the task of successful induction of new professionals. What changes should occur must happen at the level of practice, and teachers must be at the heart of it; and prospective teachers must gradually move into the profession.

Somehow we must find the time and opportunity to develop a delightful concept called "educational connoisseurship" (Eisner, 1985), which includes attending to "happenings of educational life in a focused, sensitive, and conscious way" and comparing such happenings "to discuss what one sees so that perceptions can be refined, to identify events not previously perceived, and to integrate and appraise what has been seen" (p. 221). Only then could the new professionals discover what will work for them, which blend of so many permutations could open up the magic of learning for each and every child. And all within a fail-safe environment.

There is a wonderful song in the musical, The Wiz, which encourages us to "ease on down the road." That is exactly what we should do to induct new members into the profession of teaching. It might not inhibit the reform merchants, but it might help us to meet the challenges of the impending millennium with a full force of teachers staying in the profession and feeling confident about their contribution.

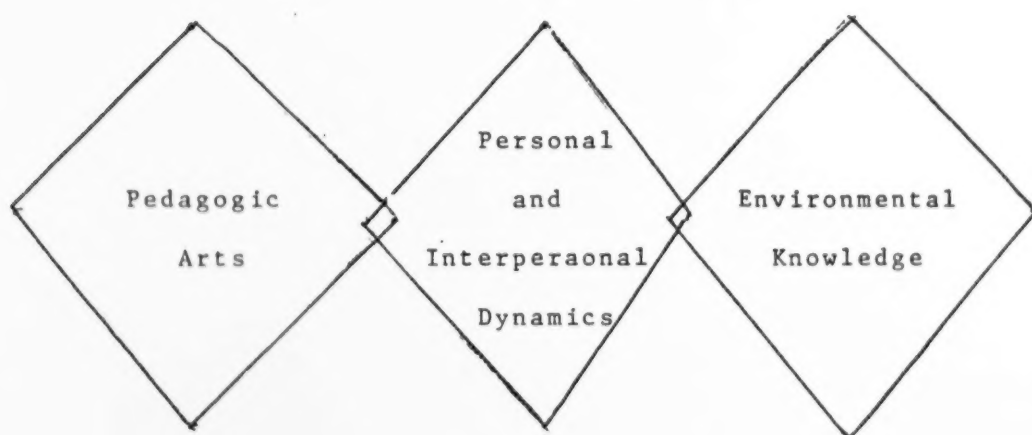
FIGURE 1



Stages of the Additive Teacher-Induction Process

Figure 2

COMPONENTS OF PROFESSIONAL LITERACY



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